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Contributors This Issue

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EDITORIAL

It is a truism that every generation of Christians must re-articulate the Faith handed over to it by its elders. It is also a truism that in every situation some part of the Faith has of necessity to be more explicitly stated than the rest. One of the most pressing concerns of the Church now is to decide just what the Church is. It is a word all too ubiquitous in theological discussion. But the ubiquity of the word is paced by its ambiguity. Yet if we are to respond properly and fully to God, we must know what we mean when we say 'I believe one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We must know our Faith in this especially, since the two great acts of the Church- worship and evangelism- neither of which is actualised without the whole man being active in them, are the acts which especially mark the Church, which peculiarly point to its existence.

Let it not be forgotten as we turn to examine this problem, that the above truths state the limits within which any discussion must proceed. The first truth states that on the one hand the Faith is always the same. It is not the result of man's experience delivered by his natural powers, but is the gift of God presented to men from outside nature. This gift is handed on intact from one generation of the faithful to the next; for each generation, upon receiving the gift, is changed by it - "recapitulated" - to use St. Irenaeus' word, from a purely natural creature, who can give only more or less inaccurate information to the coming generation, into a divinised creature - an instrument of God for the giving of the Faith, without dilution or distortion resulting from natural and sinful propensities to inaccuracy. And, on the other hand, it states that the Faith may be intelligibly related to every moment of time and every particle of space, since it is the true and complete response of the things of time and space to God. Hence the responsibility of the Faithful in every moment of time to make that total response of time and space to God actual and perfect.

The second truth is a corollary of the first. Since every moment in time is new, the relation of the Faith to the environment is necessarily also new; for the faith is

given to nature by natural instruments, and only when the two are joined will there be a full response of the creature to the Creator - full because then all the particular responses of the Faith to particular times will be gathered into one Pleroma.

We cannot deny that we who profess to be Christians are at present very much concerned about the Church. This is one part of our Faith that we want to express as clearly as possible to the world. There are the cell movements, self-conscious, sometimes over confident, of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church of France and Canada. There is the Oecumenical Movement, conversations between churches, the South India scheme, the Marathon experiment, vast evangelistic services in the Rose Bowl, lengthy discussions and experiments in evangelistic technique. All these phenomena are the result of a growing awareness in us that the idea of the Church must be re-thought. In each of these efforts, Christians are trying to answer the question of catechumens and non-Christians - what is it you mean when you say I believe in the Church.

What is the reason for attempting to present a united Christian front? It is simply an attempt on the part of Christians to witness in the 20th century to the oneness of the Church, agreed upon by Christians in the 4th and 5th centuries to be an essential mark of the Church. What is the reason for cell-groups? It is an expression of the sanctity of the Church, and its basis of community in the Holy Spirit. Why the great evangelistic enthusiasm? It is an expression of the Christian belief that only by baptism into the Church is there remission of sins.

Unfortunately there are bad as well as good motives spurring the Christian in these efforts, and we must consider them if we are to respond to God properly in the confession of Faith. Bad motives in starting a cell-group may be the attempt to create a society for mutual admiration of spiritual states, or a desire to be a pressure group for a certain view of the Church's responsibility. Bad motives behind oecumenicism may be simply vanity of numbers, in an apparent Christian fellowship; or it may be the more sinister motive of luring the world into God's clutches by a presentation of the eternal truth which is indeed merely the presentation of man's transient sentiments about that Truth. The good motives are obviously those which spring from the intentions mentioned which these

activities reveal.

But (again unfortunately) we may be using words equivocally as we express the intentions revealed in these activities. The result may be the vitiation of the very intentions themselves, since no agreement has been reached concerning the real goal. And so we may with justice be charged with fraud by the non-Christian observing these activities. All of this leads us, of course, to the crucial point in any discussion about what the Church is. There is an absolute necessity that we agree first of all about what we mean when we say 'I believe one Holy Catholic Church'. It is necessary that we recall here the two truths. We cannot, it is clear, decide what the Church is with those who deny in any way the Faith of which the nature of the Church is an essential part. The Church is not an assembly of people more or less agreed about man's proper response to God, and who come together for edification and comfort (when they need them) not of each other with the others, but of each from the others. It is rather the Community of Saints, the body of those who have been divinised, who have, to use St. Paul's phrase, 'put on Christ'. Hence the question, what is the Church, is one which only Christians are eligible to answer, for they alone have the necessary datum - Faith - to work toward conclusions about the Church's nature.

It must be made explicit that the Faith is found in the creeds and in Scripture. And because the Holy Tradition of Faith really responds to God in every moment of time, we must widen the datum to the whole body of thought which is the flesh of the Faith throughout the ages. We must never neglect what Mr. Davidson has called the 'treasury of the Church's wisdom'. This is the first safeguard against equivocality. It is one of the ironies of the Church's efforts to be a church in mind as well as in body at the present time, that it seeks wisdom first of the secular society in which it suffers. For example, it sets up 'Royal Commissions' for the revision of the Liturgy in the best bureaucratic - democracy style. Then, secondly, it seeks wisdom of the natural reason untouched by the leaven of Faith, e.g. by trusting the 'techniques' of evangelism, uncritically accepting the latest twist of idealist philosophy. And finally, and begrudgingly, or worse, patronisingly, it turns for enlightenment to the mines of consecrated wisdom which are to be found in the Fathers.

The other safeguard against equivocality is the basic faith which must be the mark of all Christian theology, that the human reason can reach conclusions which have a real relation to the world in which humans live their way to God or to the Devil. It is only, then, on the foundation of an unequivocal use of the words of Scripture and the Creeds, made possible first by the traversing of the paths illumined by the Holy Fathers, and secondly by the use of a natural reason unhampered by an essentially Idealist scepticism as to the significance of its conclusions, it is then, on these foundations alone that we may begin to explicate satisfactorily to the non-Christian and to the catechumen, the phrase of the Nicene Creed, 'I believe one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

88 "COMMUNICATION"

"... for the creation was subject to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God". (Romans 8: 20-21 R.S.V.)

At the outset, all thinking is prejudiced; that is to say, all thought is built upon certain presuppositions. The annals of philosophy are overloaded with problems as to the nature of these presuppositions. Even to begin by assuming an entirely epistemological point of view does not obviate the danger of a proton pseudos. The labyrinth of epistemological analogy is well known; it is the Kantian pit-fall that seems to obsess most of modern theology and philosophy. To enter this labyrinth is to preclude any study of metaphysics and perhaps even of ontology, the study of being.

The all-important first question before us, therefore, is, "what are our presuppositions"? I would like to maintain that they were drawn from Realism, but this might be objected to later, by the theologians of scholastic studies. And besides this, I am convinced that realism (with a small "r") is so widely definable like the term "existence" as to be rendered meaningless.

I will begin boldly, therefore, with personality, a concept which I shall define as connoting an area of relationships with a core or centre. This definition seeks to escape the imposed isolation involved in Plato's conception of the soul, and also to change the suggestive biological emphasis of Aristotle's definition, to the more volitional implication of the Hebrew "I am who I am" of Exodus III, 14. But let us keep in mind that Plato, concerned about the problem of the "one and the many", seeks through the human analogy to determine the distinctly individual nature of the soul. Also it is in Aristotle that we find the aversion to the cold conceptualism of Plato and the desire to introduce the warmth and movement of life into his definition.

Our second presupposition is the concept of communication. This is more difficult to define. In brief, it is the transmission of meaning. But there is involved here the problem of ways and means. Nicholai Berdyaev, who treats of this subject at some length, distinguishes communication from communion. It would seem that he understands communication to be an articulation of matter. That is to say communication occurs between the naturally isolated and inert subjects of the material world when these subjects are viewed as symbolical structures. On the other hand, communion is the ebb and flow within the river of Spirit. It is the entwining of spiritual threads, that suspend the universe, into a knot of perfect love. In this doctrine it is easily seen that without the advent of a logos of some sort, the inchoate and restive realities of matter cannot be conformed to meaning. But surely such is the very problem of Plato and Aristotle. How, for the former, are particular events brought to the meaning held within the forms? And how, for the latter, are matter and form brought to that unity we find in reality. Berdyaev struggles, and many claim he fails, to envisage a basic unity at the ground level of being. Resorting to the German mystic Boehme, Berdyaev indicates a unity which he calls Meonic freedom; and from which he claims the evolution of everything, including the Godhead.

Leaving the Russians, let us next consider the contribution of Martin Buber, the Jewish mystic-philosopher. This gentleman does not reach the pretensions of Berdyaev, but is content only to illuminate the basic unity which he finds in personality. It seems that experience breaks down

into relationships, the relationships we meet every day, in which the Word manifests itself. The Word is the response given to the ego, the "I", when it speaks into the void. Thus communion for Buber, does not consider communication distinct from it, is dialogic, but a dialogue, many feel, which is not of this world.

Soren Kierkegaard, the philosopher of solitude, conceives of communication and communion in the Hegelian terminology characteristic of his writing. Communion can be held between God and man, when man for a Moment stands before God "in fear and trembling", alone. Between man and man there can be only indirect speech; this is communication. For man to speak directly to his neighbour is to destroy that intimate relation by which man may alone relate himself to his real self as it is grounded in being; that is to say, to destroy communion.

Let me conclude with Henri Bergson, who admits that communion is made possible only by a complete reversion of the normal direction of the intellect. Intuition, a "simple act", is the true operation of personality and is the means of the re-introduction of personality into the eternal stream of being. Whereas intellect, the mediator of discursive or analytical thought, "expresses a thing as a function of something other than itself". That is to say, the intellect operates through symbols. "But", he concludes, "Metaphysics is the science which claims to dispense with symbols". (Introduction to Metaphysics)

Now it seems to me we have before us two distinct schools. The one, Platonic chiefly, which includes such figures as Aristotle and Hegel, is concerned with meaning as it is construed in terms of purpose. Thus, for example, from certain potentialities, certain actualities are seen (or rather pre-viewed) to result. All logic is seen to proceed from premises to conclusions. The Telos of the universe is always in the distance, just out of reach by the intellect. Of course both Plato and Aristotle had their doctrines which attempted to bring the Telos or reality, into the transience of the everyday world.

The other school, which includes Buber, Kierkegaard, Bergson and many others is concerned with meaning as it is construed in terms of the "here and now". Thus, for example, existence not essence (which is purposeful)

inflames the thought of Heidegger and Sartre. The dialogic structure that appears in Buber elicits meaning in the Moment, in an "erhebung". There is no motion or direction of purpose here, only stillness.

We can make no comprehensive judgement as to the truth or falsity of either of these schools unless we view them in the light of Christian philosophy. Now the presuppositions of a Christian philosophy are innumerable but they tend, however, to focus themselves in the doctrine of the Incarnation. For herein are matter and form joined in no other way, not in the aspect of "becoming" as in our daily experience, but in the reality of Being. Christ is not merely man but He is Destiny, man's future freedom. Now allow me another definition:

Both of the schools enjoy the use of the concept dialogue. One meaning of Dialego is "to choose", or "to pick out one from another". And of course, there is also the meaning, "to converse or argue with".

Because of the Genesis description of creation in the terms "God said", and of the Johanine description in the terms "In the beginning was the word," it seems fitting that "dialogue", understood as it is defined, be the concept that also connotes the Incarnation.

Dialogue, then, suggests a communication by means of indication or of a sign that is chosen because of its peculiar appropriateness. Such a sign is a symbol. Symbols are the shooting stars in experience which trail behind them the cynosure of meaning. Our whole life, that is to say, in one sense, our past, is made up of an interstellar darkness which is periodically illuminated by such celestial intensities. Again, the memory of our past life is like a chain of so many moons, extinct and chilled wastelands filling the silent void. From these latter we no longer derive inspiration, no longer are blinded by their flash of light. So, there are two forms of symbol. The dead and the living: the denotative materialism of custom, like a law, rigid and cruel; and the connotative spirit, the very life of spontaneity and essence of love.

Every symbol must be grounded in personality if it is to be a living symbol. Once the artist or the observer has left off the spiritual activity in creating or re-creating

the art object, the latter ceases to be a vital symbol, and its structure congeals to unreality, to a death mouldering under the dust in some forgotten gallery. At best the meaning we can derive from the writings of mystics is limited. The religious ecstasy and the artist's creation are not more easily interpreted when transposed to the verbal language. This is due to the fact that thought expressed verbally is removed from its emotional context and thereby is rendered inert. Moreover the symbolism of verbal language, being denotative, conveys meaning only as closed systems. Such is any system of philosophy. For this reason there can never be A single Christian philosophy.

Communication other than by living symbols is therefore restrictive. It appears then that rather than constituting the peculiar nature of man, reason and memory condemn him to dwell in the past - in his individual singular past among the sepulchres of Platonic forms. For as thought is restricted to systems there is within each of these, standards, and corresponding theories of truth; hence to each form, its standard and code of truths. The Real truth is thereby belied and man is in a state of Douleias - (bondage).

Thus far we have communication - a transmission of meaning by means of symbols within the context of a closed system. But is this all? Is existence, our existence, yours and mine, to be subject to the loveless cloying of the intellect? Is there no hope? I call to the symbol in stone and to the symbol in the word. Does this dialogue yield real response or merely the echo of my own voice, a little frightened? Is the meaning of life, as it is for Heidegger, death? "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope". What is this hope?

This hope is by nature a spiritual symbol as it is grounded in personality, in the person of the "I am". It is communion and not communication as in the dead symbol. For communion is a brief moment in which the artist is in his art and it in him - so with God and his creation. This is the "erhebung", the Moment, the "still point of the turning world". Art and religious experience however are not to be equated. Yet communion is not restricted to religion alone. The living symbol appears in both disciplines, in art, religion, and perhaps even in philosophy.

To clarify the distinction between communion and communication: communication is the transmission of meaning, the intellectual fluid, by means of symbols from one personality to another. Thus one personality is bound to another or to many, in the symbolically structured relations which distinguish one personality from another. To interpret further; Whitehead's concept of prehension would mean in this case the "situation" of personalities. Now the openness of a "situation", i.e. the passage of meaning, is possible only if the symbolical structure locating two or more personalities is identical, or nearly so. Otherwise the "situation" is closed and the personalities are isolated from one another. The identity of symbolical structures is not entirely the responsibility of the intellect but involves the whole being of man i.e. of his personality.

On the other hand, communion is not a matter dealing with symbols. For here the "word is unspoken, unheard"; Communion is distinct from communication by a pattern more resembling the via negativa, a pattern of deliberate unknowing, rather than one characterized by the knowable. In other words communion transmits no meaning. This can be simply understood by a glance at the concept of personality. We cannot say what is the nature of personality but only that a personality is. And here I shall leave the problem for it now broaches on the distinctions between essentialist and existentialist philosophy. Far be it for me to raise these distinctions.

To conclude: communion is perhaps one of those situations to which I referred above, of unique openness; a situation indescribably fluid, in a word, an Eleutheria (freedom or liberty). And liberty has always its direction in the future. It is the destiny of man that is free. Since we are not threatened by the future but are harassed by our pasts, it is to the latter that we may ascribe the Mataios, the futility of darkness. Whose past is not a darkness of uncomprehending? And it is also our pasts that are configured by the systems which are the offspring of the intellect. The pasts therefore are closed, they are the death in which we die daily. But our life is in the future, not necessarily ten years, nor even a day from now, but in futurity, in that which is still becoming. In this is our destiny, our freedom, and our hope.

TECHNIQUES OF EVANGELISM

"Our problem is to envisage the task of the Church in a largely alien world". The invaluable report, "Towards the Conversion of England", starts its first chapter with this quotation from the writings of William Temple. But there is a prior problem. It is to envisage the state of the Church itself. The message of Evangelism will often be heard through the words of one person, but the work of evangelism is not done until the outsider is not only won to accept the truth of the Gospel but is also incorporated into the Church. The evangelist, be he never so inspired, can do no more (as far as any real lasting 'new lives' are concerned,) than express the mind and the heart of the Church that is behind him.

The Church, then, must look to itself. It is the Body of Christ, the organism charged with the task of continuing the work of Christ in the world from the Ascension until the Day of the Lord. And that work is nothing less than the regeneration of mankind. We should be demonstrating the Way, teaching the Truth, and both enjoying and dispensing the Life. We should be conscious both of the presence of God among us and in us, and also of His tremendous concern for the Church and for the souls that should be in it, but are not. We should be aware of the mission of the Church, able like the Lord of the Church to say 'Our meat is to do the will of Him that sent us, and to finish his work'. Instead of which, we skate lightly and with practised grace over the top of the mysteries of our redemption, and settle down to be at ease in Sion with a typical weekly round of stereotyped activities. The outsider, if he thinks about it at all, can only conclude that we go to church because we like it: that the Church of God is a sort of community club for those who like a tinge of piety with their amusements.

The obvious conclusion is that our evangelism must be both extensive and intensive; and it is probably true to say that with the majority of congregations, the intensive must come first. It must surely be with great gratitude, then, that we turn to the various techniques of evangelism at present engaging the interest of the Church, and find among them the cell movement, which does precisely work first intensively and then extensively towards the world outside.

This is no new thing, for the Church itself began as a cell of twelve. Nor is this the first time there has been a definite movement to use the principle, for John Wesley's classes were cells. Historians among readers will, no doubt, be able to tell of many of the great movements of Christian experience which have had their genesis from a small 'get-together'.

The cell is a group of from four to twelve meeting informally to pray together, to study together, to learn to relate the principles of their faith to their ordinary everyday lives, and to share together their doubts and hopes, their faith and their experience. Their quest is the quest of religious reality: that their religion may become a real effective and transforming power in their individual and corporate lives. A successful cell will soon provide a genuine experience of 'koinonia' - that experience for which the word 'fellowship' is far too weak an equivalent: and which is in fact one of the most immediately attractive qualities of the genuine Christian life. The life in the cell will help to overcome the inarticulateness which afflicts so many of the laity when religious topics come into the conversation; and will make possible that very effective form of evangelism which someone has called 'gossiping the faith'. The atmosphere of 'koinonia', together with the full and frank discussion has a way of gripping the visitor so that he wants to come again, and the *body that can speak with most authority on this movement is quite emphatic that no cell should be allowed to exceed twelve in number. In this way the unit cell develops into an organism, and the ideal is of a parish honeycombed with cells each going their own pace, and linked by sending one of their number to a central cell which meets with the parish priest.

The beginnings of a cell cannot be forced or produced to order. It may grow from a study group, from a mid-week Lent course, from an adult confirmation class, from any group who are concerned about the spiritual lifelessness of the normal parish. But as throughout the life of a cell, so before it comes into existence there must be much alert waiting upon the Holy Spirit. As soon as possible the parish priest must retire into the background. The cell comes most emphatically within the scope of the term 'lay evangelism' and the parish priest should not have more to do than keep in touch with their thoughts and prayers. The priest who would foster such a development must, however,

have the ability to deal with people at the personal spiritual level in a natural and real manner. This was felt very strongly by a group of priests which is meeting to discuss these things - - that there are some of us who can only talk with any sureness of the things of God when we are clad in a surplice and aloft in our pulpits. It is obvious that around such a one as that it is unlikely that there will emerge groups whose whole life depends on the free and spontaneous sharing of one's thoughts and experience in the things of religion.

For further study on the whole question of the cell, there are two excellent pamphlets published by the *Advisory Council; and the relevant paragraphs in the report 'Towards the Conversion of England' are well worth study.

No discussion of the techniques of evangelism would be complete without reference to the parish mission. There is considerable doubt in some people's minds whether this means of evangelism is not now thoroughly outmoded. It is the writers profound conviction that the mission is in no sense a thing of the past, and that the tales of missions that failed do not speak of the failure of the method, nor yet of the missionary, but of the congregation for whom the missionary was just a temporary mouthpiece. A mission is bound to do less than it could unless the congregation behind it is ready, not only to incorporate the newcomer, but to fulfil the needs of which he has just become aware: the need for God, the need for a faith in action, the need for genuine fellowship, the need to feel that he is among people who are going with him along the road that the mission mapped out for him. The time honoured preparation for a mission is as invaluable as ever - a year is not too long. The follow-up depends on the congregation. It is of vital importance therefore that the first mention of a mission in a parish should bring about a real stock-taking. A mission to prepare a parish to conduct a mission is not the absurdity that it sounds -it could well take the form of a teaching convention. This will generally be presented as a week of consecutive instruction in the faith of the Church and in the practise of churchmanship. It is aimed specifically at deepening the understanding and clearing the minds of those who already give some sort of allegiance to the church, but who, unfortunately, are so often muddled and inarticulate about the faith they profess. The convention, like the mission, needs preparation, and a follow-up must be planned as well. If an evangelistic mission is to follow

in, say, twelve months time, the impact of the convention should be such as will start the preparation for the mission along the right lines: the people themselves profoundly convinced of the need, clear-headed about the aim, and knowing that a worldly-wise effort to make the church an attraction will be doomed to failure. Should a mission not be immediately intended, the convention should be followed by increased opportunity for prayer, for study and for the 'koinonia' which God intends there to be between those whose lives centre around the Altar.

A lot more prayer and thought is needed concerning the use of the modern agencies of propaganda and advertising: by which are meant the use of press, radio, films, television and so forth. Perhaps the most pertinent thing that has been said about the possibilities of these means was said in "Toward the Conversion of Englands": there, the relevant chapter is headed 'Preparing for the Gospel.' It is the writer's conviction that these things can be used to exercise what we may call a 'St. John the Baptist' ministry. But they will never, it seems, replace the traditional methods of evangelism, all of which in one way or another, use personal contact. The kingdom is spread through people who are usable by God. Celluloid shadows and the disembodied voice of the radio can never do the job for us.

And consecrated personalities will be most likely to emerge from a church that prays. Not only the prayer of intercession, though that most surely. It would be still more to the point if we could rediscover the key to the knowledge of God that the contemplatives have. If the Church of God is the Body of Christ, there should be no facet of the life of Christ which is not shown forth some where in the corporate life of the Body. But there are deficiencies and most notable among those deficiencies is the absence of that aspect of Christ's life which was exemplified by His long nights on the mountain tops and by the experience of the Transfiguration. Yet the secret of these things is an open secret in the treasury of the Church's wisdom, and that these things should once more take their place within the experience of the Church would be the surest guarantee that the vitality of the Church in all fields of its activity was being heightened at last to its proper pitch.

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